



CALTRANS NEWS RELEASE

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District: District 2 - Redding, www.dot.ca.gov/dist2
Contact: Denise Yergenson – denise_yergenson@dot.ca.gov
Phone: 530-225-3260

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS FIRST IN U.S. TO ADD SAFETY MESSAGES AND AMBER ALERTS TO HIGHWAY INFORMATION NUMBER

Starting today, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will broadcast safety messages and Amber Alerts, in addition to the latest information about highway conditions, on the Caltrans Highway Information Network (CHIN) number (1-800-427-7623).

Caltrans is the first state transportation department in the nation to provide this service.

Callers dialing the toll-free CHIN number will be greeted with a brief highway safety message. The alternating message will remind motorists not to drink and drive, to use caution when driving in highway work zones, to wear seat belts, or obey the speed limit.

"Highway safety is our highest priority and using the CHIN will allow us to reach a large audience with the critical messages that slowing down, driving responsibly and exercising caution are matters of life and death," said Caltrans Director Will Kempton.

The CHIN number received more than five million calls last year. Since the network was established in 1994, more than 62 million requests for highway condition information have been received.

If an Amber Alert is issued in California, callers will hear it, instead of a safety message, on the CHIN.

Kempton said providing Amber Alerts over the CHIN will encourage the public's help in response to child abductions. The Amber Alerts on the CHIN will complement the 580 electronic message signs on state highways, which Caltrans currently uses to quickly send Amber Alerts.

"Caltrans in District 2 strives to keep motorists informed about being safe on our state highways," said Brian Crane, District Director. "The addition of Amber Alert information to the CHIN is an innovative means to utilize our already established traveler information network and to provide important public service and safety information."

Callers who want to bypass the safety message can punch in their route number to get the latest road condition information or dial 811 to get additional information about any active Amber Alerts in California.

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NOTE: An electronic version of this news release is available on the internet at the following web address: http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist2/news_releases.htm

